

# Overview of the Hawaii Scenic Byway Program

## PURPOSE

The *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* is for:

- roads that “tell a story” that is special in some way;
- roads with outstanding scenic, recreational, cultural, archaeological, natural, and historic qualities that need recognition or protection; and
- roads that will benefit from a coordinated strategy for tourism and economic development.

Resources for state and local governments and for community organizations to help promote and protect these qualities are available from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) through the *National Scenic Byways Program* if our state establishes our own program for managing scenic byways. This document is the administrator’s reference guide and program manual defining the basis, procedures and standards for the *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program*.

The purpose of the *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* is to formally designate *Hawaii Scenic Byways* and to establish and implement *Corridor Management Plans (CMPs)* for our corridors. While a scenic byway is a defined route for passenger vehicles, the corridor includes everything that can potentially be seen from, or is reasonably close to, the scenic byway. CMPs for scenic byways inventory the unique qualities of the byway and identify actions to protect, enhance or restore these qualities and reduce the impacts of undesired features. CMPs are not limited to preservation of land and structures—CMPs also promote “wise use” economic development and safety improvements for motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians.

The key components of the Hawaii Scenic Byways Program include:

- a process for byway nomination and designation;

- designation criteria;
- CMP guidelines;
- application procedures and forms; and
- information materials and outreach strategy.

A process for de-designation is also included for *Hawaii Scenic Byways* that no longer satisfy the criteria that supported their designation.

## OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Nature and our culture have created numerous opportunities for establishing scenic byways in Hawaii. Today, a number of factors are challenging our ability to keep Hawaii’s byways special, and create a new urgency for this program.

Hawaii, with our numerous Pacific Ocean islands, 11 of the world’s 14 climates, rugged terrain, and thousands of years of human settlement, has a tradition that celebrates its diverse landscapes—landform, water, vegetation, and built environment— and cultures, and is one of the world’s most popular tourist destinations. Evolving from the cataclysmic change of volcanoes amid wind and water, the Hawaiian Island chain is host to a variety of cultures permeated by traditional languages, stories, rites and sites of its people.

Water and air transportation move people and goods among the islands, but an increasingly extensive network of roads move people and goods within the islands. In the future, ferries may again extend the reach of automobile travel among islands. As population and jobs increase on the islands and as more goods are demanded by and demanded from the islands, pressures to change existing roads and to develop on and near these roads are increasingly threatening or damaging the special qualities that are Hawaii.

When change is introduced into the landscape through tourism, highway projects and economic development, there is conflict with the sensitive environment and treasured places. The *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* provides a way to respect

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the cultures and traditions of the past and present while meeting expectations for the future.

## AUTHORITY

The *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* is designed to complement the *National Scenic Byways Program*, a nationwide effort to identify, promote, manage and invest in roadways that are the most significant in their region with regard to these scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological and natural qualities. A statewide scenic byways program provides a framework to:

- identify these special roadways within a state; and
- develop plans and programs to manage and promote these roads and their surroundings.

Scenic byways are roads that provide us with access to extraordinary qualities that singly, or in combination, identify the route as a very special experience.

According to the FHWA, a scenic byway is a public road that has special scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, and/or natural qualities, and that has been formally recognized as a byway through legislation or some other official declaration. A byway can include nearly any type of road or highway—and is not limited by functional classifications or widths of cross-sections.

While byways on the mainland are commonly alternative travel routes to major highways, some of the most unique roads in Hawaii are our main travel routes. These roads may need improvements to increase safety for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians, improve parking, and apply the principles of context sensitive design ([www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd](http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/csd)) to maintain and enhance qualities of the route. Unless our scenic byways are managed properly, what are now our local treasures may become attractive nuisances.

A scenic byway may be designated as a *Hawaii Scenic Byway*, *National Scenic Byway*, or *All-American Road*. A *Hawaii Scenic Byway* can be designated by the State of Hawaii based on its own criteria. However, *National Scenic Byways* or *All-American Roads* are designated by the FHWA from among State Scenic Byways that meet rigorous criteria and conditions, in return for significant financial, technical and marketing benefits provided through the America's Byways® program.

The term scenic byway refers not only to the road or highway itself but also to the corridor through which it passes. Simply stated, the scenic byway designation is focused on roads, their rights-of-way, and the corridor, which includes everything seen or

potentially seen from the road ranging from the roadway itself to the valleys, ridgelines, and skylines visible from the road. At least one of the six intrinsic qualities (scenic, historic, recreational, cultural, archeological, or natural) is found within the corridor. The *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* manages scenic byways by designating the byway and managing the corridor.

Designation as a *Hawaii Scenic Byway* does not change or limit the existing responsibility or authority of any state, county or other agency that makes decisions affecting the road or its surroundings. Designation of a byway does not restrict the maintenance or reconstruction of a highway needed to meet the traffic needs of the communities it serves, the safety improvements that help protect the motorist and non-vehicular user of the highway, or the recreational needs of the tourist and residents in the corridor. It does not in itself establish or imply greater regulation or funding, but instead coordinates and makes more effective the use of regulations and funding sources already in place.

When approved by the State of Hawaii, Department of Transportation (HDOT), the State's Scenic Byways Program will join and be reinforced by a mature national program more than 15 years old and with roots many generations older.

## VISION AND MISSION

The vision and mission of the *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* is similar to that of the national program. Recognizing that the management of scenic byways is a continuing, dynamic process, the 17 objectives for the *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* are cross-cutting, designed to be addressed by each participant in the program and to advance four goals. (See next page.)

### National Scenic Byways Program

- **Vision**

*To create a distinctive collection of American roads, their stories and treasured places.*

- **Mission**

*To provide resources to the byway community in creating a unique travel experience and enhanced local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designated Byways.*



### Hawaii's Scenic Byways Program

**Vision:** To identify and manage one or more corridors in each county that helps to tell the distinctive stories and protect the treasured places of Hawaii.

**Mission:** To provide resources to the local communities to create and sustain unique travel experiences and to enhance local quality of life through efforts to preserve, protect, interpret, and promote the intrinsic qualities of designated Byways.

#### Goals:

- Designate and manage all of Hawaii's Scenic Byways to coordinate and focus national, state, county, and community expectations and efforts;
- Maintain pride in our communities by developing and building consensus on where byway corridors are and what their future should be;
- Create and sustain partnerships that access expertise and funds for planning, preservation and projects to maintain and enhance scenic, safety and tourism qualities in corridors ; and
- Encourage sustainable tourism and economic development for the state; and potentially as part of the active, nationwide marketing efforts for the 27 All-American Roads and 99 National Scenic Byways designated in 44 states since 1996 ([www.byways.org](http://www.byways.org)).

#### Objectives:

1. Preserve, enhance, and protect the beauty of our natural, cultivated, and built landscapes and their relationship to our history, our culture, and our future.
2. Promote understanding of Hawaii's heritage and an appreciation of our diversity.
3. Provide and promote safe access to recreational, cultural, historic, and archaeological opportunities in proximity to scenic views and centers of residential and economic activity.
4. Enhance, manage, and promote tourism in proximity to Hawaiian centers of recreation and commerce.
5. Provide safe and relaxing everyday travel opportunities linked with other travel options such as bicycling, hiking, and horseback riding.
6. Encourage land uses that create and complement scenic vistas and panoramas.
7. Create and improve relationships among the architectural, technological, and engineering elements of transportation facilities and associated structures visible in the travel corridor.
8. Improve traffic flow along main routes and promote pedestrian, bicycle, and paratransit travel in ways that contribute to conserving energy resources and improving air quality.
9. Promote appropriate local and state initiatives that enhance the qualities of all state designated byways consistent with the intent of the National Scenic Byways Program.
10. Recommend specific routes for designation.
11. Encourage public and interagency participation in evaluating roadways nominated for designation.
12. Maintain and enhance intrinsic qualities of designated byways.
13. Manage signage along all designated byways.
14. Coordinate and leverage marketing and public information promoting Hawaii Scenic Byways.
15. Prepare and submit grant applications to fund projects related to Hawaii Scenic Byways.
16. Prepare agreements and other institutional arrangements to ensure that funds are expended properly on projects related to Hawaii Scenic Byways.
17. Establish systems, procedures, and resources for preparing and periodically updating byway Corridor Management Plans.



## ELIGIBILITY

Any public access roadway, route or thoroughfare, regardless of ownership or combination of ownerships, that accommodates passenger vehicles within standards of safety reasonable for their context is eligible for consideration as a *Hawaii Scenic Byway* provided that it:

- has one or more clearly identifiable “intrinsic qualities” and provides visual or physical access to these extraordinary scenic, historic, cultural, recreational, natural, or archeological features;
- meets applicable designation criteria;
- documents local support; and
- has organized a Local Byway Committee to prepare and implement a Corridor Management Plan.

A *Hawaii Scenic Byway* has the potential to be considered for designation by the United States Department of Transportation as a *National Scenic Byway* or *All-American Road*:

- *National Scenic Byway* criteria are defined by the FHWA. Roads so designated have “at least one of six intrinsic qualities;” and
- *All-American Road* criteria are defined by the FHWA. Roads so designated have “at least two of six intrinsic qualities,” are destinations unto themselves, and accommodate conventional tour buses.

## LEVERAGING ORGANIZATIONS

A successful statewide byways program can have tangible benefits that support state highway, natural resource, and tourism goals. A statewide byways program provides opportunities to apply for byway specific Federal grants for projects along designated byways, including:

- safety improvements as necessary to accommodate increased traffic and changes in the types of vehicles using the highway as a result of designation of the byway;
- facility improvements (such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities, rest areas, turnouts, shoulder improvements, overlooks, and interpretive facilities);

- improvements to the byway that enhance access to an area for the purpose of recreation, including water-related recreation;
- protection of resources adjacent to the byway;
- development of interpretive information about the byway; and
- implementation of byway marketing programs.

The *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* will create and nurture partnerships among citizens and all levels of government. These partnerships will:

- anticipate and respond to the opportunities and challenges associated with promoting a byway;
- encourage or, where necessary, manage tourism;
- provide opportunities for commerce;
- improve highway safety and traffic flows;
- enhance quality of life and pride in local communities; and
- yield many other benefits to those who experience the byway, whether as a unique opportunity or as part of their daily lives.

### Potential Federal Agency Partners

- Department of Commerce
- National Endowment for the Arts
- USDA - National Forest Service
- USDOJ - National Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDOJ - National Park Service
- USDOJ - Bureau of Indian Affairs
- USDOT - US Department of Transportation

### Potential Private Sector Partners

- American Automobile Association (AAA)
- American Bus Association
- American Recreation Coalition
- American Road Magazine
- Harley-Davidson Motor Company
- Historic Hotels of America
- MapQuest
- Mobil Travel Guides
- National Geographic
- National Trust for Historic Preservation
- Scenic America
- Travel Industry Association



By having a state scenic byways program, Hawaii then has access to and potentially can receive coordinated support from Federal agencies and private sector partners who have interest or operate in the state.

## THE DESIGNATION PROCESS

Designating a *Hawaii Scenic Byway* is a voluntary and cooperative effort to define a vision for the future of a roadway and its surrounding landscape of natural features and of structures and earthworks built by humans. The process, summarized in the diagram, ***Key Steps for Hawaii Scenic Byways HSBP-01A***, builds a consensus involving all levels of government, individuals, and private interests.

The Director of the HDOT will designate *Hawaii Scenic Byways* that satisfy the objectives of *Hawaii's Scenic Byways Program*, that are nominated by a Scenic Byway Sponsor for the byway; and that can demonstrate that a viable Local Byway Committee has been formed to prepare a Corridor Management Plan through a broad-based, intergovernmental, cooperative planning process. Only designated *Hawaii Scenic Byways* are eligible to pursue planning grant funding from the *National Scenic Byways Program* to prepare a Corridor Management Plan, and to submit a nomination to the *National Scenic Byways Program* for designation as a *National Scenic Byway* or *All-American Road*.

## CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT PLAN

For each *Hawaii Scenic Byway*, the CMP is prepared by the Scenic Byway Sponsor in cooperation with Local Byway Committee and with assistance potentially available from the *Hawaii Scenic Byways Program* and the *National Scenic Byways Program*. The CMP defines the strategies that will be implemented to protect and enhance the existing qualities of the byway. It is sensitive to local needs, qualities, and opportunities and is unique to each byway. It recommends capital improvements, investments, and design considerations. County and local governments, businesses, non-profit organizations, institutions, and individuals are encouraged to coordinate and prioritize their actions and investments with those set forth in the CMP to maintain and enhance the intrinsic qualities of the scenic byway and its corridor. Together, these measures help ensure that the byway's role for regional traffic and as a regional treasure remain compatible in the future.

## IMPLEMENTING THE PROGRAM

The Hawaii Scenic Byways Program will be instituted by HDOT by adopting and implementing formal rules and procedures; by engaging public outreach, technical assistance, and project review initiatives; and by maintaining an annual work program developed by the State Scenic Byways Coordinator(s) in consultation with the State Scenic Byways Advisory Committee.

For designated Hawaii Scenic Byways, each Local Byway Sponsor will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Corridor Management Plan, for filing or reviewing applications for National Scenic Byway Program Project Grants for the byway, and for preparing and submitting Annual Reports of progress to the State Scenic Byways Coordinator.

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